

CLASSIFICATION **CONFIDENTIAL**COUNTRY PolandREPORT NO.                     

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TOPIC Polish Troops in Piolsko-Piala

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EVALUATION                     PLACE OBTAINED                     DATE OF CONTENT October 1948 to August 1950DATE OBTAINED                     

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DATE PREPARED 8 December 1950REFERENCES                     

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1. Prior to August 1950 the prewar Artillery Barracks in the southern sector of Piolsko-Piala (Q 50/X 88) were occupied by a Polish motorized artillery regiment. Soldiers known to source referred to it as the 17th Arty Regt and stated that the regiment had been transferred from Oppeln (P 51/J 17) to Piolsko-Piala in 1947. They also said that the regimental commander was of Russian descent and belonged to the Polish Army only since 1947 or 1948. (1)
2. Units of from 120 to 150 troops were seen leaving for field exercises. Each of three motion picture performances given one day was attended by 250 to 300 men.
3. Among the acquaintances of source were soldiers from Krakow (Q 51/Z 24), Danzig (Q 55/Y 42) and Wroclaw (Q 51/V 74). From them he learned that some personnel of the 1927 class, the entire 1929 class, and some personnel of the 1929 class were in service with the army in the summer of 1950. The 1925 and 1926 classes were discharged. Men born after 1929 could volunteer for active service. Inductions were effected in the spring and in the fall. Soldiers said that the term of service with the motorized artillery was 27 months. (2)
4. From conversations source gained the impression that the soldiers were not enthusiastic about their military service. They complained that the Soviets were more and more infiltrating the Polish officer corps. Some soldiers said that, in case of war against the west, they ought to "take to the woods".
5. About 15 guns of 100 to 120 mm caliber were observed at the artillery barracks. The guns had two pneumatic tires, no muzzle brake and a vertical shield. Their prime movers were trucks of American make. (3) Small arms observed included submachine guns, rifles with fixed bayonets and carbines. The submachine guns were of Soviet origin and had wooden stocks and 71-round drum magazines. The unit was predominantly equipped with submachine guns.

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6. The soldiers wore field caps or round, brownish-green service caps with a red ribbon, a black vizor and the Polish-eagle emblem in front; brownish-green coats with red-bordered epauletts of the same color and red braid at the tips of the collar patches; a leather belt with a buckle; trousers intended to be tucked into laced boots, or breeches with wrapped leggings; and overcoats or, sometimes, quilted cotton uniforms in winter.
7. Training was chiefly conducted in the billeting area. No guns were observed with troops leaving for a road march. In April 1950 a large-scale field exercise was held near Bielsko-Biala, with the artillery regiment participating. Upon completion of the exercise another artillery unit moved through Bielsko-Biala, having about 60 trucks, many of which were towing artillery pieces.
8. A unit of about 100 men, generally referred to as an infantry unit, was quartered in an old permanent barracks installation, located about 500 meters east of the Artillery Barracks and between the railroad line and the road to Zywiec (Q 50/X 96).
9. Every spring and fall this unit received recruits who, after six months basic training, were shipped out for reassignment. It was known in Bielsko-Biala that the recruits were committed to work in coal mines upon completion of their basic training. Some of them worked in coal mines at Brzeszcze (Q 50/X 99) and Czechowice (Q 50/X 88). (4)
10. The unit was equipped only with small arms, including machine guns with wooden stock and drum magazine, submachine guns with metal stock and slightly curved clip magazine, and carbines.
11. The troops wore brownish-green blouses with belt, trousers intended to be tucked into laced boots and, as headgear, most wore the four-cornered Polish Army cap. No details on service colors or insignia were known.
12. Prior to August 1950 no Soviet troops were stationed in Bielsko-Biala. Only one officer clad in Soviet uniform and accompanied by Polish officers was repeatedly seen in the summer of 1950. It was rumored that a five-story building on Smolki Square (formerly Goethe Square) was to be vacated by the civilian residents and was to be used as a Soviet officers' billet. The eviction of residents had, however, not been effected by August 1950.

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- Comments.
- (1) Probably the 23d Light Arty Regt of the 6th Inf Div, which was repeatedly confirmed in Bielsko-Biala.
  - (2) The data on the classes are correct. They confirm available information on the induction system in Poland. However, the service term with the artillery is two years, the same as that of all other branches of service. 27-month service term has only been introduced into the KBW (Corps of Internal Security) and the WOB (Border Guard Corps). See Article 42 of the Universal Military Law of 4 February 1950.
  - (3) Probably the Soviet model 1939 field cannon of 76 mm caliber, which is used in light artillery units. The caliber stated was highly overestimated. The model 1938 field howitzer of 122 mm caliber, which might also be concerned, has a slanting shield. It is probable, however, that one battalion of the regiment was equipped with these field howitzers, which were not observed by the informant.
  - (4) Possibly one of the labor units that have been frequently observed in the industrial area.

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